

Amendment 3370 - To ensure funding for victims of Hurricane Sandy is not spent on deceased individuals, tax cheats, or fisheries located more than 50 miles outside the disaster area.

This amendment would prohibit emergency Sandy appropriations from being spent on the following:

- Entities and individuals with seriously delinquent tax debt
- Deceased Individuals
- Fisheries located outside the affected area

With thousands in need of federal assistance for basic needs like housing and billions of dollars in damage to critical infrastructure, it is Congress moral obligation to ensure emergency Sandy funding is not wasted.

By prohibiting emergency disaster funding from being directed to those who owe the government back taxes, are deceased, and to certain entities located outside the affected area, Congress will ensure scarce emergency funding is made available to those in need.

This amendment will decrease the likelihood emergency funding is wasted through payments to tax cheats or individuals using identification numbers of dead persons in order to defraud the government and profit from this tragedy.

No Sandy Funding for Entities and Individuals with Seriously Delinquent Tax Debt

The amendment would prohibit individuals and entities who have not paid their taxes from receiving federal emergency Sandy funding.

While millions of Americans continue to send back portions of their hard earned wages to Washington, many are failing to contribute their share.

Emergency Sandy assistance should be provided immediately to those who need assistance in this challenging time. However, Congress should not allow these funds to be directed to individuals and companies who have failed to pay the taxes they owe.

This amendment carefully reaches only those citizens who have willfully neglected to pay their incomes taxes and have become seriously delinquent on a tax debt owed to the United States.

It is in the best interest of taxpayers for Congress not to turn their heads at income tax delinquency, but instead spend the Hurricane Sandy relief money in the wisest possible way.

The term 'seriously delinquent tax debt' means an outstanding debt under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for which a notice of lien has been filed in public records pursuant to section 6323 of such Code, except that such term does not include--

'(A) a debt that is being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement under section 6159 or section 7122 of such Code;

'(B) a debt with respect to which a collection due process hearing under section 6330 of such Code, or relief under subsection (a), (b), or (f) of section 6015 of such Code, is requested or pending;

'(C) a debt with respect to which a levy has been issued under section 6331 of such Code (or, in the case of an applicant for employment, a debt with respect to which the applicant agrees to be subject to a levy issued under such section); and

'(D) a debt with respect to which relief under section 6343(a)(1)(D) of such Code is granted;

Prohibiting Sandy Funding for Deceased Individuals

The amendment would prohibit deceased individuals from receiving federal emergency Sandy funding. Congress should ensure the proper oversight of federal emergency funds by prohibiting the distribution of benefits to deceased individuals.

Unfortunately, Washington has a long history of failing to combat fraud, and in many cases criminals have used the Social Security numbers of deceased individuals to defraud the government of billions of dollars.

In the past decade, Washington sent over \$1 billion of your tax dollars to dead people. Washington paid for dead people's prescriptions and wheelchairs, subsidized their farms, helped pay their rent, and even chipped in for their heating and air conditioning bills.

In some cases, these payments quietly gather in a dormant bank account. In many others, however, they land in the pockets of still-living people, who are defrauding the system by collecting benefits meant for a now-deceased relative.

Since 2000, the known cost of these payments to over 250,000 deceased individuals has topped \$1 billion, according to a review of government audits and reports by the Government Accountability Office, inspectors general, and Congress itself.

Examples of payments to the deceased:

- The Social Security Administration sent \$18 million in stimulus funds to 71,688 dead people and \$40.3 million in questionable benefit payments to 1,760 dead people.
- The Department of Health and Human Services sent 11,000 dead people \$3.9 million in assistance to pay heating and cooling costs.
- The Department of Agriculture sent \$1.1 billion in farming subsidies to deceased farmers.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development overseeing local agencies knowingly distributed \$15.2 million in housing subsidies to 3,995 households with at least one deceased person.

It is Congress duty to ensure funding intended to assist Hurricane Sandy victims does not fall prey to this inexcusable waste.

Prohibiting Funding for Fisheries Located 50 Miles Outside FEMA Declared Disaster Area

The amendment would prohibit fisheries outside of the FEMA declared disaster area for Hurricane Sandy from receiving Sandy emergency funding.

The bill provides \$150 million for fisheries that have faced other natural disasters during calendar year 2012. From this, Alaska expects to receive substantial funds to help replace salmon losses from 2010, 2011, and 2012. Further, one congressional member from Alaska made it clear the funding provided in the Hurricane Sandy relief legislation would be used to “help make communities whole and hopefully help fund research on factors affecting Chinook returns.”

This amendment would prohibit this funding from being provided as part of the emergency Sandy relief funds. It is inappropriate to provide funding for target local projects such as salmon in Alaska through an emergency bill meant to meet immediate needs in the northeast. Congress should consider appropriations bills on a routine and annual basis, which is the more appropriate vehicle for debating and providing funding for the country’s non-emergency priorities, such as researching salmon.